

Periodical
(An Original Weekly Periodical Work.)

[Price, 5 Cents.]

THE

REMEMBRANCER,
For Lord's Day Evenings.

No. II.

For Lord's Day Evening, January 8, 1797.

FIRST GENERAL TRUTH, ON THE BEING
OF GOD, AND OUR RELATION TO HIM,
HE BEING OUR CREATOR, WE HIS CREA-
TURES; AND ON THAT OF INFERIOR
CREATURES TO US.

Designed chiefly for those who are in a Natural State.

To be continued for two years.

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No. II.—For Lord's Day Evening,
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The being of God is reckoned the first, greatest, and most fundamental of all things that are the objects of knowledge or belief.

EDWARDS.

IN our last number we spoke chiefly on that sense which is natural to all men of God's being, which I observed seems prior to any apparent distinct proofs of it; in this number I would speak of a few of these proofs. And I judge, when added to that sense, they will appear to come in their proper place. Not that persons in general distinguish these from that, they seem all together and indistinct in their own breasts. But when we treat on these things in writing, it is unavoidable to distinguish.

THAT proof which seems to contain every other that God is, or that there is a God, is, That effects must have their cause; or in scripture language, "That things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear." This truth seems impressed alike upon the man who cannot read, as upon the greatest scholar. The force of it cannot be withstood. It is

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among our first notices and inquiries, Whence this? who made that? It takes but little time indeed to be acquainted, that we ourselves are not the work of our own hands, nor the ten thousand thousand things which are ever around us. Whence the grass, the corn, the plants, the trees, the fruits, a child asks. Whence the light, the air, the winds, the rain, the clouds, the sky, it asks; and a child can answer, as well as the profoundest philosopher. That there is a Maker of all things is a truth fastened upon us much closer than we are aware of. It is true, we do not often speak of it one with another; it is neither begotten nor preserved in us by conversing upon it; however, it lies close within us.

It seems to thousands of us, that we carry not with us any known demonstrable proofs of it. Perhaps if asked for one we could abide by, we should at first be at a loss. It would seem to us that the notion of God's being grew up with us we know not how, or that we had received it from our parents, or our catechisms. But upon examination it would be found, that we had imbibed it on the surest ground, even this, That creatures must necessarily have a Creator. We in a moment see, that self-creation is the greatest of absurdities. A fly, an ant, much more a bird, a beast, puts us in mind of its Creator. We

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have been put in mind of this from childhood. So that it is not from having no proof of God that we seem at a loss when called to shew it, but having it so repeatedly, or habitually, or fully, that it swallows up distinct notice.

THE evidence we are upon is one of the simplest, and yet one of the deepest. It affords a high dignified pleasure to see a wise philosophical man wade in it : to see him step thus : Could a creature or being create himself, he must be before himself. But surely to be before himself is the same as not to be. If then he is not, how can he create ? Can he be creator before he is a creature, or has a being ?--This reasoning all must see the force of. A reasonable being cannot depart from it. The consideration of the antiquity of things, or of their having been in a long established course makes no odds. Had the world, the ordinances, the laws, the course of it, been under operation ten thousand years, or had they been but ten days, the certainty is the same. "From the creation of the world are clearly seen God's eternal power and Godhead."

AND yet it is the simplest ; as I have said, a child must take it in. It is as natural for us to reason, as it is to breathe. The child that looks out of doors, and sees the sky, is immediately convinced that its parents

parents could not make it, nor any like them ; the conclusion then is, there is one greater than they : there is one more to be feared than they.

Now certainly no man can pretend to be ignorant of God. None can say that he has no proof of his being. None need to have an angel from heaven to assure him of this. None can lie down with the fowls of heaven, nor with the beasts of the field.

AGAIN, the evident design or end which is so manifest in creatures, whether it be subordinate, or ultimate, as to their formation, faculties, supplies, preservation, proves an intelligent author of nature beyond all scruple. If we know ourselves to be intelligent by the ends we design, and the schemes we lay to accomplish them, we know God to be so in the same manner.

WHEN we enter a city, and see all the works of art, how certainly we conclude that rational beings formed it : so being entered into this world, and seeing all the works of, what we call, nature, but properly God, how certainly we may conclude that his intelligent hands formed it !

THOSE who have sought out the laws and ends of creatures, have done it to their admiration. They have been overcome with the footsteps of intelligence. As it were line and rule, weight and measure,

sure, have been seen in the minutest parts. Indeed the evidences of wisdom and understanding in created natures, so infinitely beyond the wisdom of man, is a subject which a thousand pens have run upon. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming."

BUT what strikes us creatures is, the constancy or continuedness of those things, which, if formed by us, or under our care, would quickly break apieces, and be known no more. The fine mechanism, or admirable parts of thousands of creatures surprizes us, but we are more surprized with their duration, their preservation. Could a man look into his own living body, and see the blood flowing through all its parts, on the first moment of sight he would be struck indeed, but he may come moment after moment, month after month, year after year, it admirably flows still. Preservation is as admirable as creation; yea, some have been used to call it continued creation.

A MAN who stands and observes the flowing of the tide, the gradual steady increase of so great a body of water, whilst he beholds, wonders, but upon its occurring that it does so every day, more than wonder is felt.

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With regard to the continuation of the course of nature (as we commonly express it), the sun's rising and setting, the moon's waxing and waning, the seasons' coming and going, the vegetable and animal creatures' living and dying, in the steady returns and appearances of these what surprizes us is, that men fall and rise no more ; that they come up as a flower but only once ; they don't spring again. The following thought has gone home to many a man's soul, This night I shall close my eyes, or the next, but to-morrow morning the sun shall rise as clear and light as ever, and the morning after. A man has looked on the spot of earth he possesses, This, says he, shall bring forth as freshly and plentifully as ever, years that cannot be told, but in a little time, my very body shall not bring forth the poorest weed.

BUT I fear departing from the subject of this paper.

NEXT to creation, in proof of the Creator,--(God blessed for evermore !) we are naturally led to providence, or to that present, active, governing hand, which is over all. Creation, as it were, *takes hold on us* on every side, providence *speaks to us* on every side ; and both alike manifest God. This last is a subject of many branches, it extends to what is high, to what is low ; to what is natural, to what is spiritual ; to creatures irrational, as well as rational, and to events which no human eye regards. If it be like

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the great and mighty ocean ; it is like the sweet, still, flowing brooks of water. If it sometimes roars and shakes the mountains, sometimes it hardly shakes the reed. But whether it be on the mountains, or in the vallies, God is there. As he was there passing before Elijah when a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, when there was an earthquake, and a fire, so he was there with the widow of Sarepta and her son, when the barrel of meal wasted not, and the cruise of oil failed not.

It is nearly as difficult to take our eye off from the governing of creatures, as it is from the creatures themselves. Indeed there is that in the former which will strike us and open our eyes, when they are close enough as to the latter. With the former every man must have to do, whether he will or not with the latter. "They shall see." (Isa. xxvi. 11.)

But this subject must be resumed in another paper. We feel that we have to do with it. It is what nearly interests us. Though I shall not there enlarge upon it, as having to do with it in the duties and sufferings of life, but only as it abundantly proves the being of God.

Now to close this second number ; Reader, suffer me to put you in remembrance of the day. It is true, this day commemorates the resurrection : but does

does it not also creation ? certainly it does. There could have been no redemption without creation. This new rest puts us in mind of the old rest. It is true, the old rest is no more. It is broken up forever. The seventh day is lost in the first. But we must remember the seventh, that we may know how we came by the first. We must know the violation, that we may rightly understand the restitution in him who rose from the dead.

WHAT has my Reader heard in his place of worship of the being of God to-day, or of the proofs of that being ? Let him remember that he needs to be put in remembrance that GOD IS. We forget him (this is natural to us) as a dead man out of mind. "God is not in all their thoughts." Be glad to hear of God. Why should you not be ? Is it not more rational to hear of him, than to see him in images and representations, in wood and in stone ? " My people have forgotten me days without number." Reader, prize, from the heart, any means whatever serving to remind of God.

